

**Testimony of Connie Coggins, CEO of HealthReach Community Health Centers
In Opposition of portions of LD 390 "An Act Making Unified Appropriations and Allocations
for the Expenditures of State Government, General Fund and Other Funds and Changing
Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for
the Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2018 and June 30, 2019"**

Senator Hamper, Representative Gattine, Senator Brakey, Representative Hymanson and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committees on Appropriations and Financial Affairs and Health and Human Services my name is Connie Coggins and I serve as the CEO of HealthReach Community Health Centers. HealthReach is a federally qualified health center which provides high quality medical, behavioral health and dental services to approximately 28,000 patients at 11 sites in Central and Western Maine including Bethel, Coopers Mills, Livermore Falls, Rangeley and Kingfield. I am here today to express our opposition to a portion of the Biennial Budget as it is proposed.

As healthcare providers, we are particularly concerned about the proposed reduction in eligibility for MaineCare Parents. Effective July 1, 2018, eligibility for those with incomes at or below 100% Federal Poverty Level (FPL) would change to include those with incomes at or below 40% FPL. Estimates show that 18-25,000 people would lose eligibility. With incomes below 100% of the Federal Poverty Level, these parents would fall into the coverage gap. They would not be eligible for subsidies on the Exchange. Also concerning is the proposed elimination of MaineCare eligibility for 19 and 20 year olds which may remove as many as 5,800 young adults from the MaineCare program.

We have seen the result of changes to Medicaid eligibility. In 2011, our Health Centers served 8,640 Medicaid patients. In 2016, HealthReach served a total of 5,272 patients with Medicaid coverage. During this timeframe, several changes were made to Medicaid eligibility including the elimination of the non-categorical waiver and earlier changes to Parents expansion population. It would be reasonable to assume that with the implementation of the Affordable Care Act and the availability of subsidies, those who were no longer eligible for Medicaid coverage would have commercial insurance coverage and Health Centers, therefore, would see an increase in the number of commercially insured. Unfortunately that was not our experience – as noted over those 6 years our decrease was 3,368 Medicaid patients and the number of commercially insured actually decreased by 153 patients. Our overall patient population decreased by 2,874. Although we experienced growth in the Medicare population, it could not offset the declines of the Medicaid population.

Our concern is for our patients. Despite the availability of sliding fee services and our outreach efforts, patients make different decisions about seeking care when there is no payer source. Rather, they wait until their situation is dire and then seek more expensive care in hospital emergency rooms.

HealthReach Community Health Centers

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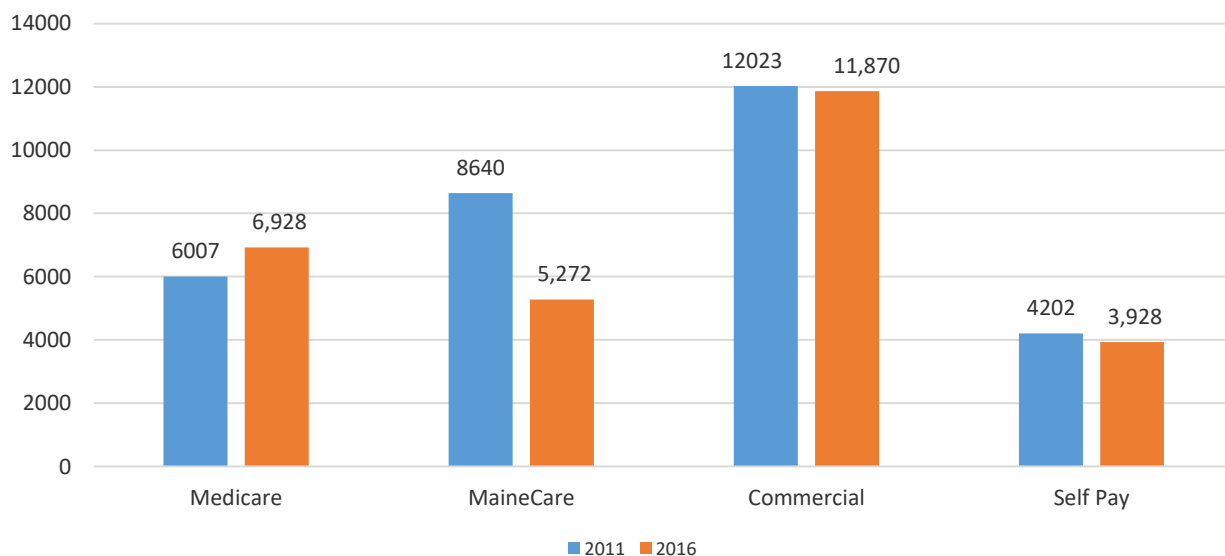
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With or without Medicaid coverage, HealthReach and the 19 other federally qualified health centers in Maine will continue to provide high quality care for our communities. If these cuts are accepted, we will outreach to our patients making sure they are aware of our sliding fee programs and provide reassurance that we will continue to support their medical, behavioral health and dental care needs. However, our sliding fee program will only assist with services at our health and dental centers; it does not include hospital charges, outside laboratory expenses, homecare, community care management, or specialty medical, behavior health and dental care not available at our health centers.

If these proposals are accepted healthcare providers will be faced with the financial realities associated with lost revenue from cuts to MaineCare eligibility for thousands of individuals. We will need to evaluate the services we offer to our patients and the salary and benefits we provide our staff; all of which will add to the barriers that exist for recruiting and retaining primary care providers. As the CEO of an organization providing healthcare to over 28,000 people and employment to over 220, I ask you to reject the proposals which would further constrict Medicaid eligibility.

Thank you for your time. I would be happy to answer questions if they arise.

HealthReach Community Health Center Patients by Primary Insurance



Belgrade Regional Health Center
Bethel Family Health Center
Bingham Area Health Center
Bingham Area Dental Center

Lovejoy Health Center
Madison Area Health Center
Mt. Abram Regional Health Center

Rangeley Family Medicine
Richmond Area Health Center
Sheepscot Valley Health Center

Strong Area Health Center
Strong Area Dental Center
Western Maine Family Health Center